DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 054 404 AC 010 611

AUTHOR MacGregor, Norman

TITLE Some Adult Educational Elements in Ancient Eastern Education.

PUB DATE Oct 71

NOTE 59p.

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29

DESCRIPTORS *Adult Education; *Ancient History; *Continuous Learning; Educational Philosophy; *Non Western Civilization; *Religious Factors

IDENTIFIERS Arabia; China; India; Judea

ABSTRACT

The existence of adult educational elements in acient India, China, Judea, and Arabia is demonstrated in this paper. Hindu and Buddhist adult education is discussed first, followed by Chinese adult education, Jewish adult education, and Islamic adult education. Conclusions of the study on which this paper reports are: (1) the existence of the human thirst for knowledge is demonstrated anew; (2) the effect of the religio-philosophical bases on the educational systems' workings is shown; (3) the motivating role religion plays in human learning is apparent; (4) small-group methods, personalized instruction, and a friendly learning climate were used in ancient times; (5) the ancient life-cycle could be adapted by modern adult educators to preserve the advantages of detachment and freedom of thought during the senior years; and (6) adult education in the ancient cultures was adjusted to the daily life pattern of the people so that every eligible person would be eligible to participate. From this study, modern adult education can ascertain what a force for peaceful social transformation and individual growth adult education has been and can continue to be. (DB)

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SOME ADULT EDUCATIONAL ELEMENTS IN ANCIENT EASTERN EDUCATION

by

Norman MacGregor, Ph.D.

Director of Christian Education
Fairview United Methodist Church
Bloomington, Indiana

to

October 1971

AC010611

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Introduction

Purpose

The purpose of this paper was to round out and fill in the gaps in C. Hartley Grattan, In Quest of Knowledge, to make students aware of the adult educational elements present in ancient Eastern education, and to stimulate further research into this area.

Significance

The author's interest in the adult educational aspects of ancient Eastern education was aroused by two articles in Convergence, Vol. II, No. 3, 1969; "Continuing education in the professions - the pioneers: Solon, Confucius, Hippocrates," by J..R..Kidd, and

"The first universities: Takshasila and Nalanda," by an anonymous author. The author subsequently noticed that while Dr. Grattan devoted whole chapters to Greece and Rome, and also mentioned briefly adult education among the ancient Mesopotamians and Egyptians, he omitted ancient India, China, and Arabia, and barely mentioned the Jews. Although ancient India and China have exercised less direct influence on our Western educational heritage, they possessed vast educational systems which are not without interest to modern adult educators.

The Jews of the Second Commonwealth developed one of the most outstanding educational movements in human history, which saved them from oblivion and which does exert much influence in Western education today. Much of their efforts were directed toward adults. Although Dr. Grattan dealt with the educational flowering of late Medieval and Renaissance Europe, he failed to mention

one of its major causes - the Islamic educational revival, in which adult education played a vital role. All of these areas are worthy of present study and future research.

Definitions

Because the adult educational element in these ancient educational systems is such an unexplored area, the terms "adult education" and "ancient" must be clearly defined.

"Adult education" is the equivalent of "lifelong learning," which, in these ancient lands, was usually part and parcel of the regular educational system, not separate and marginal as it is in the West today.

"Ancient" refers to the period from the earliest available records to the early Medieval period in Europe. In the case of Islam, the study is carried a

little farther to demonstrate how Islamic education influenced that of late Medieval Europe.

Limitations

This study, based on available English-lanuage sources, was not intended to be exhaustive. Nor was any attempt made to critically evaluate the sources, some of which do seem to show partisanship toward the ancient glories of "their" educational systems! As ancient Eastern education is not likely to be a familiar field to students, the attempt has been made to set the adult educational elements in their proper perspective by providing some general background. However, students who intend to make a study in depth will probably find it necessary to supplement this with additional readings.

The author will have fulfilled his purpose if, having demonstrated the existence of adult educational elements in ancient India, China, Judea, and Arabia, he succeeds in arousing the interest of historians and philosophers of education, so that they may explore carefully where he merely points.

Hindu and Buddhist adult education

Hindu education

Hindu education was participated in to gain salvation by learning the whole truth, of which life and death are parts. Its purpose was to enable the person to expand into the absolute, by freeing his mind from its connections with the material world. Consequently, Hindu education was more concerned with subject than with object, and the inner than the outer world. Mind was to be driven down into the deeper, undisturbed layers of its own innate strength where it could apprehend knowledge directly.

Although Hinduism rejected particularism, each student was treated as an individual. Whether the

teacher was a householder or a hermit in the forest, the intimate relationship between him and his few students enabled them to acquire his spirit as well as his knowledge. There was no schism between theory and practice, for the teacher was the living embodiment of the ideals of Hindu education.

The rejection of the world of things in favor of the inward world did not interfere with manual and vocational training. The student was trained in necessary practical matters, and his practice of daily begging helped him to identify with humanity as well as to develop his sense of unattached selfhood.

Although the normal course of student-ship was fixed at twelve years, the entire course of life was included in the concept of student-ship. The Brahmins ideally passed through four successive stages of life; student, householder, hermit, and wandering ascetic.

During this last stage, the mature, if not elderly, individuals again resorted to teachers in order to learn truths which were still obscure to them.

Although the Brahmins controlled education, the two next highest castes participated in education to such an extent that student-ship was almost a universal, compulsory educational system among all three castes. As education was considered a second birth (the teacher was referred to as the "midwife"), these three higher castes were called the "twice-born." There is little literary evidence for the education of the lower castes, but their developments in agriculture, crafts, music, and dancing presuppose some education. Their teachers were Brahmins. We know little of industrial and vocational education among the ancient Hindus. Apparently, it was run on the apprentice system, and was conducted in the homes of the teachers, much as the regular

education. Government and law were studied in close contact with their actual practice. Medical students had to become proficient in both theory and practice in many branches of medicine.

Despite the low social standing of women, some were able to become educated, and some even acquired a good knowledge of the Veda, considered the highest level of education. Ladies' clubs conducted schools, among their other activities. Another institution for popular education was the asrama, which was a suburban retreat to which adult citizens could go to listen to lectures and discussions. Asramas were very similar to university extension centers, and some attained great size.

The highly individualistic nature of Hindu education did not favor the growth of large, impersonal institutions. There were, however, assemblies of learned men, called Samghas, as well as conferences,

bands of wandering scholars, and groups corresponding to Academies of Science. During the Epic Period, 1400 to 1000 B. C., hermitages became, in effect, forest universities, for many small hermitages, specialising in religion, logic, physical science, and biology clustered around a central hermitage. As it was recognized that learning was truly life-long, groups of ten to twenty-five expert Brahmins, supported by gifts and completely dedicated to knowledge for its own sake, lived together in households, which resembled graduate schools. These were called Parishads, and they flourished around 1000 B. C.

Buddhist education

The Buddhistic period of ancient Indian education extended from 320 B. C. to 290 A. D. Buddhism arose out of the background of Brahminism. Rather than a revolt

against the caste system, it was an assertion of the Brahminhood of virtue against the Brahminhood of mere birth. Consequently, Buddhism was more democratic and concerned for the masses than Hinduism, although most of the members of the Buddhist Orders were from the respectable castes. There was absolute freedom of thought and conscience. As Buddhim broke the Brahmin monopoly of education, it may have thus awakened a desire for education among the masses.

The Buddhist educational system was similar to the third and fourth stages of the Hindu life pattern. The basic unit was a small group of young monks living under the guardianship of a common teacher. These small groups than federated themselves into monasteries. Although Hinduism had monasteries, Hindu education centered around the sacrificial system, while that of the Buddhists centered around their monasteries.

The monastery substituted for the family. While the individual monks remained ascetic, the monasteries tended to accumulate great wealth. Nor was the relationship between teacher and pupil as intimate as under the home-centered Hindu system. The Hindu system operated on the monarchical principle, while the Buddhist system operated on the republican principle.

As the monks had to engage in secular as well as religious work, the monasteries opened up opportunities for arts and crafts and business training. The Buddhist use of the vernacular gave impetus to the study of vernacular languages. The proselyting nature of the Buddhist movement determined its teaching methods. Debate was emphasized, although discussion and lecturing were also used. Twice a month the monks from neighboring monasteries gathered together to confess their sins. This practice not only overcame the isolation

of the individual monasteries, but was also a means of moral education.

Although the Buddhists regarded women as intellecually and morally inferior to men, the movement opened up a new world of culture and social service to both nuns and lay women. The nuns were usually taught by monks, although some nuns became teachers and intellectual leaders in their own right. Buddhist nuns worked with the sick and the outcasts, and some even became successful preachers with large followings. On the whole, the Buddhist convents opened to women new opportunities for education, self-improvement, and social service, in which women could make themselves the equals of men. As the Buddhist movement depended upon the laity for its support, the education of the laity was very important. As the monasteries did not ordinarily teach day students and could not possibly

have done all the education necessary within the growing Buddhist movement, other educational centers had to be set up to teach the arts and sciences to the children of the laity. Thus, Buddhist learning was not confined to the monks, but spread through all the ranks of the people. Where Buddhism got control, education in a monastery was compulsory for all boys. Under Buddhism there was much progress in medicine, especially in surgery.

Several Chinese scholars visited India in ancient times, and their reports and observations give us one of the most valuable sources of information of actual conditions. Both Fa-Hien, who visited India from 399 to 414 A. D., and Hiuen Tsang, who visited from 629 to 645 A. D., found many groups of Hindu scholars, who spent their lives learning and doing charitable works. They travelled about, freely sharing their insights

with anyone they met. Hiuen Tsang found in the Buddhist monasteries many schools of thought being studied together. He counted 5,000 monasteries in operation, which demonstrates how evenly education was diffused across the countryside. Academic debates and tournaments were held everywhere, and attracted scholars from all parts of the country. I-Tsing, who arrived in India in 672 A. D., mentioned that Buddhist monasteries had secular sections, where students were instructed in secular subjects by student monks. I-Tsing found that even the monks were able to secure government jobs because of their secular education. Secular students had to support themselves, unless the monastery provided scholarships. Although the Buddhist monks had an educational monopoly, they shared their education with everyone.

The Buddhist educational system eventually culminated in large monastery-universities, the greatest of which was Nalanda. This institution possessed a large library and was devoted to post-graduate studies and research by advanced scholars. I-Tsing found 3,000 students there, and Hiuen Tsang found 10,000, with 1,510 teachers. The leading Hindu university was Taxila, which admitted married householders living nearby. Many poor students had scholarships, and those who did not worked during the day and studied at night. Undoubtedly, many of these were adults. The content of ancient Indian education included natural science, grammar, philology, astronomy, literature, arithmetic, law, music, medicine, military science, transportation, calculating, writing, and agriculture.

Adult educational elements

There are several points in ancient Indian education which are of interest to adult educators. Within the Brahmin caste and the Buddhist priesthood, lifelong learning was normative, although the pattern differed. The Brahmin life cycle demonstrated how the individual can prepare for his adult responsibilities, make his contribution to his family and community, and then, during his declining years, detach himself from worldly distractions to bring his inward development to completion. Ancient Indian education demonstrated how adult learners can learn effectively in small, personal discussion groups,based upon the free and open exchange of ideas. As the Brahmins and Buddhist priests did not keep their educational monopoly to themselves, but shared it with anyone who had a desire to learn,

education was a liberating force in ancient Indian society, freeing many, especially women, to be creative in both intellectual and humanitarian ways. Although dominated by religion and philosophy, ancient Indian education was concerned with all areas of life, and this helped to develop the country as a whole. Learning was geared to practice, and not to mere theory alone. Much popular education may simply have been ignored by the Brahminical schools. India was 60 percent literate in ancient times, even before the Buddhist monasteries started popular education. The free exchange of ideas stimulated the spread of learning throughout the length and breadth of the country. The Buddhists' success in the use of the vernacular demonstrates the importance of communicating at the learner's own level. Finally, the willingness of adult students to support themselves and their families while studying

is a reminder of the passion for learning which many people, then as now, fortunately possessed.

Chinese adult education

The basis of Chinese education

The educational system of ancient China stood in sharp contrast to that of India, in that it existed solely to furnish able and honest men for government service. It was, therefore, a government function, and the Emperor, as supreme ruler, was also supreme teacher. However, during many periods of Chinese history, the government was able to secure enough qualified men by stimulating private study, rather than supporting public school systems.

The foundation of ancient Chinese education was the belief in an underlying Tao, or the way that human destiny should unfold. This true way of life could not

unfold unaided, and education was, therefore, the cultivation or development of the Tao. Upon this was added the high ideals of professional conduct, which were kept before the eyes of Chinese students for 2,000 years. The content determined by this foundational belief was primarily practical ethics, closely related to the life of the community. The core, called the "Five Humanities," consisted of the duties inherent in the relationships within the family and the state. To this were added the three R's, music, poetry, history, rituals, and archery. The effect of this philosophy and content was the maintenance of a stable and harmoneous society through most of China's history.

Learning and teaching were regarded as two halves of the same process. Every teacher studied as long as he was a teacher. An intimate, personal relationship between the teacher and pupil was considered very

important in ancient China, as in India. The existence of rapport and a friendly spirit was considered essential, and the influence of the teacher's character was felt to be of great significance. Teaching methods were adapted to individual student differences, and were based on the principle of developing the individual from within, proceeding in gradual transitions from the easy to the difficult. The student was expected to exert his own ability and do independent thinking.

The history of Chinese education

Schools must have existed in China prior to 2000 B. C. However, during the dynasties of Hsia, 2205 to 1766 B. C., and Shang, 1766-1122 B. C., schools and colleges were definitely set up, state educational officials were appointed, the civil service examination system was developed, and all were organised into a

single, integrated, whole. It is important to notice that this educational-civil service system was open, not only to aristocrats, but also to commoners who demonstrated ability.

It was during the Chou Dynasty, 1122 to 255 B. C., that ancient Chinese education reached its zenith. Schools operated everywhere, and at all levels of education; from the rural hamlet schools, to the state colleges, to the national colleges in the capital. Students were admitted to higher schools and colleges on the basis of regular examinations, as were applicants for government jobs. Even office holders were examined periodically. The school teachers were retired civil servants, chosen on the basis of virtue as well as ability. Four factors enabled this educational system to flourish as it did; it was open to all classes, was centrally administered, the examinations were based

on real ability, and all officers were chosen from the colleges rather than the lower schools.

During the eighth through the sixth centuries B. C., the chaos caused by the decline of Imperial authority brought this high period of Chinese education to an end. Confucius, 551 to 449 B. C., and his disciple, Mencius, 371 to 288 B. C., as well as other reformers, had little success in their attempts to revive Chinese education. Confucianism regarded education as human growth, and held that, as men are nearly alike by nature, the wide differences between them arose from different development and experiences. Confucianism was based upon faith in education to transform the masses. It was not strictly democratic, however, for the way by which the lower classes were to be transformed was by imitating the virtues of the scholar class. Nevertheless, under Confucianism, the

masses had rights, especially the right to enter the educational system if they showed ability. During subsequent dynasties, Confucianism was opposed by Taoism and "legalism," which denied education to the masses. The ascendancy of Confucianism always coincided with eras of high culture and attainment, but Confucianism was too cold and intellectual to serve as a popular faith for living. The writings of Confucius eventually became the core of all subsequent education, although, unfortunately, this was also the beginning of the trend toward a narrow, literary, concentration on these Confucian classics.

During the more peaceful Han Dynasty, 206 B. C. to 221 A. D., Chinese education began to recover, helped, in part, by improvements in reading and writing technology. Most education was by private study, which was convenient and economical, and not likely to be disrupted

by political changes. Most scholars also did private tutoring. Consequently, education flourished in some places and at some times, depending to a large extent on how much it was encouraged by local officials. The National University grew to great size during the reign of the Emperor Wu, 140 to 86 B. C., and many of the students were men between the ages of fifty and seventy. The revival of Confucianism during the Han Dynasty also revived a practice of the Chou Dynasty called "social education," the systematic education of the people apart from formal schools and classes. Officials for social education were appointed to advise and guide rural communities and help improve the customs of the people.

The fortunes of China's educational system rose and fell as the various dynasties came and went. Most education was private, although some emperors set up public colleges in the capital or in provincial capitals. The

civil service examination system also competed, with varying success, against the practices of inheriting or being recommended for public office. During the T'ang Dynasty, 620 to 907 A. D., and the Sung Dynasty, 960 to 1280 A. D., China made much progress and the educational system recovered much of its ancient greatness. The National University in the capital was open to both aristocrats and commoners, and foreign countries began sending students to China. In 1151 A. D., a system of educational support resembling our land-grant colleges was instituted. Yet, despite all improvements, the original purpose of the examination system was gradually lost sight of, and the quality of Chinese officialdom declined as a result.

Adult educational elements

Looking at ancient Chinese education in retrospect, it can be seen that the isolation of Chinese

communities, the Chinese reverence for antiquity, and the absence of the Western concept of progress were balanced by an underlying democratic spirit, which enabled the humblest subject to reach the highest offices through sheer ability. Nor is this the only aspect of Chinese education of significance for adult educators of today. The emphasis on a warm, personal, friendly relationship in the learning situation, respect for individual differences, and the practices of every teacher being also a student and of officeholders having to pass periodic examinations all accord well with contemporary adult education theory. The Confucian spirit, although not fully democratic, believed in the peaceful transformation of the masses through education, both in official schools and also unofficial "social" education, which reached every corner of the nation. The universities apparently admitted many men who were

intent on pursuing their studies will into old age. As the civil service examinations had no age limit, it sometimes occurred that three generations in one family studied and sat for the same examination. The practice of carrying on education at the village gates as the people passed to and from their fields, as well as during the winter months, demonstrated how adults can adapt circumstances to educate themselves. All of these factors contributed to the practice of lifelong learning based on education closely related to the actual needs of the day.

The stability and orderly change which characterized many of the ancient Chinese dynasties were the product of adult education, which many nations are still trying to achieve today.

Jewish adult education

The determining factors

Ancient Jewish education directly affects Western education to a far greater extent than the ancient educational systems of India and China. All Jewish life, including education, was influenced by seven determining factors. The first was the original nomadism of the primitive Hebrews, which continued to influence their social institutions and religious ideas. The second, the environment, was a powerful determinant in Jewish life, for the small land of Palestine lay between the two great powers of Mesopotamia and Egypt, and was the natural trade route (and battle ground) between them. Furthermore, the land divided itself into many natural districts, which

fostered localism at the expense of national unity. Thirdly, Palestine's location insured frequent contact with many foreign nations, which meant that Judaism was continually threatened by dilution with foreign ideas. The most important determining factor in Jewish life, fourthly, was composed of its distinctive religious concepts; monotheism, the universal fatherhood of God and consequent brotherhood of man, and the blending of religion and morality. The fifth determining factor comprised the Josianic Reforms of 621 B. C., which centered the worship of Yahweh in Jerusalem, where it could be controlled by the official priesthood. Sixth, although Yahweh was as tyrannical as any other primitive deity, the ancient Jews thought of him as a moral deity. The last factor was the Prophetic conception of Yahweh as a loving, forgiving, universal father.

Historical development

As Abraham was a man of importance, he was probably well-educated from both his native Babylonian and Egyptian sources, and possibly from Hittite sources as well. Joseph and Moses received their education in Egypt. It is likely, therefore, that many of the Jewish leaders during the nomadic period were men of learning and culture. Thus, although the nomadic period opened with the practice of heaping stones to record events, it closed with a written law which still exerts its influence today. During this nomadic period, learning was accomplished by actually participating in the daily life of the family and tribe, and by public meetings and festivals. Religion did not dominate life to the extent that it did after the exile, but there was no phase of life which it did not penetrate.

The Jewish movement into Palestine and the consequent adoption of a settled, agricultural way of life increased the need for education, particularly in new arts and crafts. The rise of the Monarchy sharply increased the need for written records, and reducing the laws to writing for all the people to read increased the need for general literacy. By the days of the Prophet Jeremiah, 645 to 586 B. C., writing was used for general communication. The home was still the main source of education, although the many shrines scattered throughout the land must have been centers of education as well as worship. When the Josianic Reforms gathered the priests from these shrines into Jerusalem, the Temple became the national center for both education and worship.

During this period, three groups came to have an important influence on Jewish education; the priests, the

prophets, and the scribes. The priests taught individuals privately and the multitude publicly. Their public teaching was carried out through worship and festivals, which taught religion and history by means of drama. They collected the laws, ceremonies, legends, and histories, and edited them for easier learning. Their communities provided instruction for a class of people devoted to teaching.

The second group of educators during the period of the Monarchy were the prophets. Essentially, they were public preachers who declared the will of Yahweh in the royal court and spearheaded religious and social reforms. The majority lived in communities where they built their own schools, supported by voluntary contributions. They also wandered about, teaching anywhere, but especially on the porch of the Temple. The prophets knew reading, writing, literature, oratory, and composition. They

frequently taught by means of drama, symbolism, and object lessons. In contrast to the professional priests, the prophets were a lay order and were open to anyone, including women.

While the prophets were the teachers for the people in general, the scribes were the professional teachers. Originally, their main function had been as secretaries and historians, but under Ezra this changed to the spreading of the Law throughout the land.

All of these three groups engaged in lifelong learning, although there is no question that the prophets were the most revered and had the greatest influence in attacking evil, elevating the nation's concept of Yahweh, and clarifying its mission in the world. They accomplished this through their public teaching, for by this time arithmetic, geography, music, astronomy, and handcrafts were widely known, and literacy was common.

During the period of the Divided Kingdom, the bad conditions of civil war, invasion, and chaos seriously reduced the spread of education among the common people. However, the ideal of public education still remained.

The Second Commonwealth, following the return from Babylonia, saw an unprecidented revival in Jewish education, based upon three great goals. The first was that a return to the laws of their fathers, coupled with the spread of education, would not only enable the Jewish nation to survive, but would also give it a distinctive place among the other nations. The second goal was even stronger - the religious obligation of every adult male to study the Law and teach it to his sons. No less important was the third goal, to universalize Jewish education. Whereas before the Exile only the prophets and priests had a full knowledge of the Law, after the Exile every Jew was to be a guardian priest of the Law, with

the obligation to teach others what he himself had learned. Despite their ascetic poverty, teachers were highly venerated.

The central content of Jewish education during the Second Commonwealth was the Law, which judged all of man's acts according to God's will. The Law thus enabled the Jews to have communion with God and live a practical life, infused with holiness. This good life was based on education, in which secular knowledge and culture was taught in relation to the Law, thus producing an integrated life. Receiving education meant dedicating one's life to God and his laws.

Adult educational elements

The Jewish emphasis that one should never discontinue his education is important to us because it resulted in almost universal adult eduction. The motiva-

tion for the lifelong learning of the Law was twofold; there had to be constant review to prevent forgetting, and there was always more to be learned. The education of Jewish adults proceeded through both public and private channels. There were several public channels. Public Scripture readings were held at mass meetings in Jerusalem. Several times each week there were Scripture readings in local synagogues. The synagogue services themselves were educational, as were the sermons. On holidays the rabbis explained the meaning of the festival to the people. The adult Jews of those ancient times also educated themselves through their own personal efforts. Each individual reserved part of each day for the study of the Law. Frequently, two or three would find a quiet spot and study together. If ten or more persons could get together, they would find a teacher and organize a regular class. Another channel of adult education

used by the ancient Jews was the practice of sitting in on the children's classes and auditing the lessons. As the schools were closed to women, this avenue of learning was for men only. Women could and did take advantage of all the others. They also taught their children and sometimes supported their husbands while they studied. Whatever shortcomings the Jewish methods of adult education during the Second Commonwealth may have had, a higher proportion of the whole community participated in them than is the case in most communities today.

Our study of the ancient Jews has shown us that life-long learning was expected of every educated person, as it was in ancient India and China. Also, there were a variety of channels, adapted to the life patterns of the people, so that no one was excluded from the possibility of continuing his education. However, the greatest lesson ancient Jewish education has for modern men is

the example of how a small nation saved itself from oblivion through the practice of universal lifelong learning.

Islamic adult education

Early history

Mohammed received his religious call in the year 610 A. D., and as his message was intended to be spread throughout the whole world, it was necessary for his followers to become educated. Also, it was the duty of each new convert to Islam to learn its teachings, rituals, and revelations, and this meant studying the Koran. In consequence, an interest in education was aroused for the first time among the common people of Arabia. Improving one's economic and social position was also a motivation. As Islam spread to other countries, its educational system developed in the older educational centers of the conquored nations.

Anyone who wanted to learn was free to do so in the Moslem world, and there were many encouragements for poor students, such as scholarships, boarding schools, and public kitchens. Although most students came from the middle class, rich and poor sat together in the same classrooms. Most teachers were craftsmen or merchants who taught in their spare time. Although they were intellectuals, they were close to the masses because of their business, and public lectures were often banned by the Caliphs because the teachers used them to promote social justice.

During its earliest days, Islamic education was carried out in the houses of learned men, later the mosques were the educational centers, and, eventually, separate schools were established. Bookstores and the free public libraries were also important centers for teaching and learning.

The aims of Islamic education were both religious and secular. The religious aims centered on Mohammed as the supreme prophet, the Koran as the religious basis of all education, and the equality of all men before God and man. Important secular aims were the pursuit of all knowledge as the revelation of God's nature, and an educational system open equally to all, restricted only by interest and ability. Paradoxically, teachers of higher subjects were revered, while elementary teachers were despised, although attempts were made to elevate their social status.

Later history

The importance of the Islamic educational system lies in the fact that the ancient Greco-Roman learning, having passed through Syrian-Nestorian scholars to Persian and

Hindu scholars, was passed by them to the Moslem scholars. Each group of scholars enriched the body of knowledge, the Persians making the greatest contribution. The "golden age" of Islamic scholarship lasted from 750 to 1150 A. D., during which period academic freedom prevailed and the world was an open book. Growing dogmatism and Mongol invasions caused the decline of Islamic education, but during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, translations of the accumulated knowledge began to pour into Europe via Spain and Sicily. The new European universities assimilated this flood of new knowledge, which dominated the European curriculum until the coming of Copernicus, Paracelsus, and Vesalius in the sixteenth century. Arabic became the "lingua franca" of the Mediterranian world, and spread the new learning as Europe awakened and the Moslem world declined.

Adult educational elements

Islamic education is of great interest to the adult educator. It is still a matter of dispute whether Mohammed himself remained illiterate, but his adult disciples learned to read and write in order to read the Koran. Many of these became literate in their old age. As the Islamic educational system developed, lifelong learning became the rule, rather than the exception. The Prophet's Tradition stated, "Seek knowledge from cradle to grave." At least one old scholar took this to heart , and tried to find the answer to a troublesome question on his death bed.

Some classes were limited to those over twenty or thirty, but there was no upper age limit. They were open to any adult, including slaves and women, who wished to attend. An educated person could learn or teach at any

age or at any time. Every teacher remained a scholar, and every scholar was a potential teacher. Many students were married and had families.

The teaching-learning methods of the Islamic educational system are also of interest to adult educators. The teacher sat with his back to a wall or pillar, and the students sat in a semi-circle in front of him. If there were many students, two concentric rings were formed, so everyone would be close enough to hear. The lecture method was used, but the students were encouraged to ask questions and debate disputed points with the teacher. The atmosphere was free, spontaneous, and conducive to experimentation. During the decline of Islamic education, this free education, arising naturally from the people, was replaced with authoritarianism and education for the elite only.

Unfortunately, the actual number of women who participated in the classes open to them was small, and even fewer bacame scholars. Most women got their education through an educated relative or a private teacher. The education of most slaves was neglected in actual practice, although some became educated through attending school with their masters. Slave girls were educated to increase their value!

As in the foregoing systems, lifelong learning among the ancient Moslems was expected, not marginal. The main channel was the educational system itself, in which adults could freely participate full- or part-time, depending on their resources and interest. It was adult education, to a large extent, which preserved the educational heritage of the ancient Greco-Roman world, and made it available for the dawn of the modern age. It may be said that the spread of Islam was brought about by the book as well as

by the sword. During its early centuries, Islam was an adult education movement! It spread across the Arab world like a shower in the desert, liberating the human spirit and carrying ancient learning to new heights.

General conclusions

The purposes of this paper were to fill in gaps in Grattan's history and to make students aware of the adult educational elements within ancient eastern educational systems so that further research could be performed.

Perhaps it may be possible, in addition, to derive some useful insights from the study as it stands. First, it demonstrates anew the existence of the human thirst for knowledge, which exists everywhere and at all times, and which need not be diminished by advancing years.

A second insight is that of the overwhelming effect of the religio-philosophical bases on which educational systems are built, upon the outworking of those systems. To begin with, some common patterns can be recognized running through most of the ancient educational systems

studied, for example; lifelong learning as the duty of each educated person, some concern for the education of the masses, women, and slaves, the all-pervading influence of religion, interest in secular subjects as well, scholarly asceticism, and the high social status of the educator. Yet, examples can be found of differences in practice caused by differences in the underlying philosophy. The this-worldly Chinese education produced a stable, well-managed society but could not explore the deep philosophical issues of the other-worldly Indian education. Yet, the Chinese civil service decayed as the basic educational outlook became separated from daily life and shifted in the direction of purely literary scholarship. How stimulating was the new wave of interest in education which swept in on the heels of the Buddhist and Islamic religious awakenings! And what a contrast was the decline of Islamic education as fatalistic orthodoxy

replaced the earlier spirit of freedom. In addition, what a contrast to their previous practices was the Jewish revival of interest in education as a means of national survival, following their Babylonian experience.

Thirdly, in many of the foregoing situations, adult educators can discern what a powerful motivating role religion plays in human learning. How can this force be re-discovered in our secular age?

The study of these ancient educational systems adds justification to the emphasis which adult educators tend to place upon small-group methods, personalized instruction, and a friendly learning climate. These methods were used by adult educators in ancient times - and with good results!

Adult educators, fifthly, can recognize that the Brahmin life-cycle of student, householder, hermit, and ascetic is a recognition of the changing roles that the individual plays during his life span. Could this ancient

life-cycle be adapted by modern adult educators to preserve the advantages of detachment and freedom of thought during the senior years, while avoiding the extreme asceticism of the Hindus? How can lifelong learning be made integral instead of marginal in a person's experience?

Last, adult educators can see in what ingenious ways ancient adult educational institutions and methods were adjusted to the daily life pattern of the people they were intended to serve, so that every eligible person would be able to participate despite his other obligations.

From this study, modern adult educators can see more clearly what a powerful force for peaceful social transformation, as well as individual growth, adult education has been - and can still be! All of these issues need to be studied more fully. Yet, however much we may differ

from the lifelong learners of the ancient East, we can only regard them with the deepest admiration and respect.

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